

International Joint Statement on Cyprus

The organizations and political parties signing this joint statement pledge to work for a Cyprus where Greek and Turkish Cypriots can live together peacefully without discriminations and external interventions.

The rejection of the UN Secretary General's "Annan Plan" can become a step in that direction.

The huge majority that voted No to the Plan in the Greek Cypriot side cannot be accused of chauvinistic and isolationist tendencies. They have valid class reasons for objecting to the Plan.

* Reasons to mistrust the initiators of the Annan Plan. The governments of George Bush and Tony Blair cannot be trusted to promote peace in Cyprus when they are continuing the barbaric occupation of Iraq and their support for Israel's oppression of the Palestinians. Cypriots remember all too well the role of the USA in promoting military dictatorships in Turkey and Greece and the failures of the UN in Cyprus in 1964 and 1974.

* The idea that Turks and Greeks in Cyprus need outside intervention to keep them away from each other's throats is outrageous. And yet this is exactly the philosophy of the Annan Plan. It establishes again Britain, Greece and Turkey as "Guarantor Powers". Cypriots remember Britain as a colonial power that still keeps military bases, which occupy 10% of the island. Greece and Turkey have both violated Cyprus with a military coup and a military invasion in 1974. The presence of western judges and bankers in the Supreme Court and the Central Bank of the proposed new [United Cyprus Republic] Cypriot Republic makes Cyprus resemble cases like Bosnia, where western "peace plans" have brought war and misery.

* The Annan Plan's efforts to balance constitutional and territorial arrangements between the two communities do not promote confidence building and friendship. Tens of thousands have to be moved from their homes. Greek Cypriots living in the Turkish Cypriot State and Turkish Cypriots living in the Greek Cypriot State are deprived of their elementary right to vote. This is hardly a recipe for democracy and easing of tensions.

The Yes vote in the Turkish Cypriot side is an expression of the continuing popular revolt against the Denktash regime and the legitimate aspirations to break out of the isolation imposed by the Greek embargo. There is no fundamental contradiction between the one side's Yes and the other side's No. These developments create an opportunity for both sides to approach each other directly without the pressures of the international "mediators". On both sides left wing parties are the leading political forces. Dimitris Christofias leads the Greek Cypriot Parliament and Mehmet Ali Talat is the Prime Minister in the Turkish Cypriot side. The Left can take the initiative in promoting rapprochement. This may start with the Greek Cypriot government ending the embargo on the Turkish Cypriots and offering the Turkish Community as much autonomy as they want. Unity cannot be imposed by force or blackmail. It can only come with the free will of both sides.

We do not believe that the European Union can provide the framework for this process. The EU Commission and the major European governments are notorious for using entry negotiations as a means for imposing terms and conditions on applicants. The EU pressures on the Greek Cypriots to "vote Yes to the Annan Plan or else" are only the latest example. The diplomatic battles over Turkey's entry to the EU may see American and Franco-German interests clashing and the Greek government manoeuvring to gain concessions from Turkey. We are opposed to the use of a Greek or a Greek Cypriot veto in the EU over Turkey's entry. It is up to the Turkish people to decide if they want to join.

Prosperity will not come to Turkey or Northern Cyprus through the neoliberal "adjustments" imposed by the EU. It can only come through workers uniting to oppose privatisations, job losses, wage freezes and other similar attacks. Cyprus has a not too distant tradition of Greeks and Turks belonging to the same trade unions and left parties. It is by looking to that tradition that we can open the way for a better future.

Around the planet a new anti capitalist movement is growing, offering the hope that another world is possible. Cyprus is not an exception. Both in the North and in the South people have been inspired by this new international movement. Building this movement in Turkey, Greece and Cyprus can strengthen peace and friendship in the island.

The antiwar movement has made progress in that direction. Greek and Turkish Cypriots have demonstrated together against Bush's war. They have been encouraged by the antiwar demonstrations in Turkey that succeeded in preventing a northern front in the war against Iraq last year and are preparing a "warm" welcome for Bush on June 26 this year. Antiwar strikes and demonstrations in Greece played a similar role. Blair's crisis and the massive growth of the antiwar movement in Britain is a critical factor in the struggle for a Cyprus that will escape a future as a stepping stone for imperialist aggression in the Middle East.

We pledge to continue in that direction. We urge all activists and left wing forces to help build a stronger antiwar movement and to demand

- **An end to British military bases in Cyprus**
- **The withdrawal of all troops from Cyprus**
- **No Greek or Turkish participation in the occupation of Iraq**
- **Support for Greek and Turkish Cypriots getting together to fight for a common future without external blackmail and internal ethnic competition.**

Socialist Workers Party - Britain (SWP)

Socialist Workers Party - Greece (SEK)

Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party - Turkey (DSIP)

Workers Democracy - Cyprus (WD)

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